

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, on February 15, 2013, I was not present for rollcall vote 45. If I had been present for this vote, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for one vote on February 13, 2013 and votes today. I would like the record to show that had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 40, "nay" on rollcall votes 43 and 44, and "yea" on rollcall vote 45.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I was unfortunately unable to cast a vote on rollcall No. 44 and rollcall No. 45 on February 15, 2013. On rollcall No. 44 I would have voted "nay." H.R. 273 would extend the current pay freeze for federal workers by another nine months. Continued freezes, budget cuts to agencies, and ideological attacks on federal workers undermine the federal government's ability to recruit and hire a talented and high-skilled workforce while bringing us no closer to a responsible approach to deficit reduction. The men and women who have dedicated their careers to public service already have made sacrifices in pay and benefits totaling more than \$100 billion to help reduce our nation's debt. On rollcall No. 45, H. Res. 65 condemning the Government of North Korea for its flagrant and repeated violations of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions, for its repeated provocations that threaten international peace and stability, and for its February 12, 2013, test of a nuclear device, I would have voted "yea."

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF FORMER CONGRESSWOMAN CARDISS COLLINS

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to acknowledge the life and the legacy of the late Congresswoman Cardiss Collins.

Congresswoman Collins was the first African American woman to represent a Midwestern district in this Congress. During her more than 20 years in service here, she boldly represented the Seventh Congressional District of Illinois after the untimely death of her husband, Congressman George Collins. She also led her peers with distinction as the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Now I ask, Mr. Speaker, for all of my colleagues to join me in a moment of silence to honor Congresswoman Cardiss Collins.

THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the President

stated, "with renewed confidence," the "state of our Union is stronger."

I know that the President would certainly like that to be the case, but I wonder: Is the confidence stronger for the more than 22 million unemployed and underemployed Americans and their family members who remain struggling to make ends meet?

Mr. Speaker, is the confidence of Americans renewed when they fill their gas tanks and oil tanks with fuel at record-high costs?

Mr. Speaker, is their confidence renewed when the most recent economic data show America's economy shrinking for the first time in 3½ years?

The challenges facing the Nation do require smart solutions, but unlike the President, I believe smart solutions mean smarter government, not bigger government. They mean a greater emphasis on promoting individual freedoms, lower taxes, and fewer regulations in order to grow jobs and opportunities for those struggling and searching for greater opportunity. They mean fewer restrictions on accessing energy under Federal lands, which can dramatically increase domestic supply and lower energy costs for all. These are among the solutions we need.

THE SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS

(Mr. WAXMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, today, 22 Members of the House have banded together to create a Safe Climate Caucus to end the conspiracy of silence in this House of Representatives about the dangers of climate change and the Republican denial of its existence and their rejection of the science.

We are committing to talk every single day on the House floor about the urgent need to address climate change. President Obama is leading the way. He says we must respond to climate change because to do otherwise would be to betray our children and future generations.

We are ready to get to work. We understand the threat facing our children, and we know our Nation has the know-how and the ingenuity to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, but to do so, we must act now.

TRUCKERS AGAINST TRAFFICKING

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Mike, a truck driver, pulled over at a rest stop. He noticed a young girl approaching multiple trucks. The girl, who was clearly under age, came up to his cab and offered him sex for money. She seemed scared, and he asked her a few questions. She told him that, if she did not bring in enough money for her

trafficker, the beatings by him would get worse.

Thank goodness she had the courage to call for help.

Mike understood the signs of human trafficking through an organization called Truckers Against Trafficking. He called the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, and authorities immediately arrived. The trafficker was arrested, put in jail, and the girl was rescued.

I commend Truckers Against Trafficking. It is critical for our citizens to be educated about sex trafficking so we can end this scourge. America cannot continue to be blissfully silent while modern-day slavery is occurring in our communities.

And that's just the way it is.

CLIMATE CHANGE

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in addressing the immediate and increasing threat of climate change. States and localities are beginning to respond to this threat, but they can't do it alone. That's why I'm introducing two bills to help our communities prepare for the future impacts of climate change.

The first is the Coastal States Climate Change Planning Act. It provides funding to coastal States and communities so they can plan and implement climate change mitigation projects, such as seawalls, habitat buffer zones, and flood control systems. The second bill is the Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Act, which provides funding for local water agencies. Water agencies are very concerned about the need to increase the resiliency of our aging water infrastructure systems because they're going to be impacted by climate change. These critical infrastructure projects will not only improve public health and safety, but they will also help our local economies grow by providing jobs.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to take action on climate change, so I hope we can work together to pass these and other commonsense measures to address such a critical issue.

STRENGTHENING BACKGROUND CHECKS ACT OF 2013

(Mr. FITZPATRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the Strengthening Background Checks Act of 2013.

The tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School has rightfully focused our collective attention on the question of how we can best prevent senseless gun violence. An important tool in preventing gun violence is the National